



FW: Revised press release, ready to go, can be added to the website too
Rubinkam, Michael to: Terri-A White, Roy Seneca

03/20/2012 03:53 PM

From: "Rubinkam, Michael" <mrubinkam@ap.org>
To: Terri-A White/R3/USEPA/US@EPA, Roy Seneca/R3/USEPA/US@EPA
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Any response?

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Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2012 15:43:24 -0400
To: Associated Press <mrubinkam@ap.org>
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Date: Tue, Mar 20, 2012 at 3:32 PM
Subject: Revised press release, ready to go, can be added to the website too
To: **Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy**
Cc: Zack Malitz <zack@waterdefense.org>, Jean Pockrus <jean@waterdefense.org>

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Ana Tinsly, Water Defense:

EPA Water Test Results Prove Fracking Contamination in Dimock

Gasland Director, Water Defense call results “a vindication” of residents’ complaints, Call on EPA to Compel PA to Action and Provide Replacement Water

Gasland Director Josh Fox and Water Defense today said that the Environmental Protection Agency’s preliminary water test results for Dimock, PA vindicated long-standing allegations from residents that their water was contaminated from nearby gas drilling. Despite initial pronouncements from EPA Region 3 that the water poses no immediate health threat, the test results reveal the water is anything but safe, with explosive levels of methane, heavy metals, and hazardous chemicals associated with gas drilling. Gasland and Water Defense commended the EPA for undertaking the tests, and called on EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to compel the state of Pennsylvania to provide long-term water relief for the affected residents.

“The science in this case triumphs over the spin. After a media rollercoaster ride the EPA test show conclusively that Dimock families’ water wells are contaminated with high and explosive levels of methane. The families are vindicated and their calls for a permanent water line should be heeded by US EPA,” said Josh Fox, Director of Gasland. “I’ve been working with these families for three years now. Their resilience is remarkable and I am still moved and impressed by their endurance and dignity.”

"The building that houses my water well has a built in bomb shelter," said resident Sheila Ely, commenting on the explosive levels of methane in her well water that could blow up her house if her water well was reconnected.

“For three years, the families of Carter Road have had to endure not only dangerous, explosive conditions, but slander and attacks from a powerful industry dedicated to silencing its critics and concealing the truth about its practices,” Claire Sandberg, Executive Director of Water Defense. “Administrator Jackson affirmed her commitment to protecting public health when she announced the EPA would undertake this water testing. Now that the facts are in, it is incumbent on her to take action and compel the state of Pennsylvania to provide long-term replacement water for the affected families.”

EPA withheld water test summaries from the press and the public when it made its announcement last week, even as they implied in a statement that Dimock’s water had been given a clean bill of health. Josh Fox and Water Defense procured the tests directly from six of the affected families, who are all in litigation with Cabot Oil and Gas. Five families who are also in litigation with Cabot have not yet received their test results from the EPA, although initial media reports implied that the 11 families who received test results were the same infamous 11 families in litigation. Five of the families who have thus far received their results are not currently suing Cabot.

All six of the results obtained by Gasland/Water Defense contained at least one serious health concern, either from chemicals present or methane levels. In four of the six summaries obtained by Gasland/Water Defense, methane levels exceeded the 7 mg/l actionable threshold necessary for mitigation under Pennsylvania law—the standard previously cited by former Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner John Hanger to justify the construction of a water pipeline for the residents of Carter Road. One of the test results showed methane levels seven times the PA limit.

The test results also showed dozens of other contaminants, including heavy metals and dangerous chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process. Safe levels have not been established for a majority of these chemicals, although many can cause serious health ailments including cancer with short or long-term exposure.

A number of independent experts reviewed the water test summaries provided by the six families. These included chemist and MacArthur “genius” award-winner chemist and first responder Wilma Subra, water test expert Steven Penningroth, toxicologist Theo Colborn, and SUNY Oneonta chemist Ron Bishop. All concluded that methane levels were dangerous to residents and pointed at the long chain of science implicating Cabot Oil and Gas and faulty gas wells as the source of the thermogenic gas.

“Any suggestion that water from these wells is safe for domestic use would be preliminary or inappropriate,” said Dr. Bishop.

“The large number of chemicals detected in the water wells, even though present in concentrations below primary and secondary MCL, pose a cumulative risk threat to individuals continuing to be exposed to the water source,” said Dr. Subra.

And Dr. Penningroth writes, “All six wells have measurable concentrations of ethane associated with the relatively high concentrations of methane noted above. The presence of methane and ethane together suggests that both may come from shale formations. In other words, the presence off ethane suggests that the methane is deep and thermogenic, not shallow and biogenic.”

Gasland and Water Defense called for the complete test results to be released by the EPA for further analysis, citing inconsistencies in the available data. Among the concerns cited were differing standards of safety and differing detection levels employed for the same contaminants on different tests.

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